

King Scallop Fishery

The king scallop fishery is a dredge fishery, comprised mostly of vessels under 12m. The fishery is subject to gear limitation, a night-time curfew and spatial management measures to protect vulnerable seabed habitats. Scallops accounted for more than half of the shellfish landed, by weight, in 2021* and SSMO logbook data have shown a steady increasing trend in landings from 2000 onwards with a peak of 5.3 million scallops in 2022 (Figure 1).

There has been an overall increase in scallop LPUE since data collection began in 2000 (Figure 1) though it may be that initial increases in landings and effort reflect improving compliance with data collection in the initial years presented. The mean LPUE shows an overall increasing trend between 2000 and 2021, albeit while fluctuating. The substantial increase of LPUE in 2008 was seen to level off, yet increase, between 2009 and 2022 with a peak in 2022 (Figure 1).

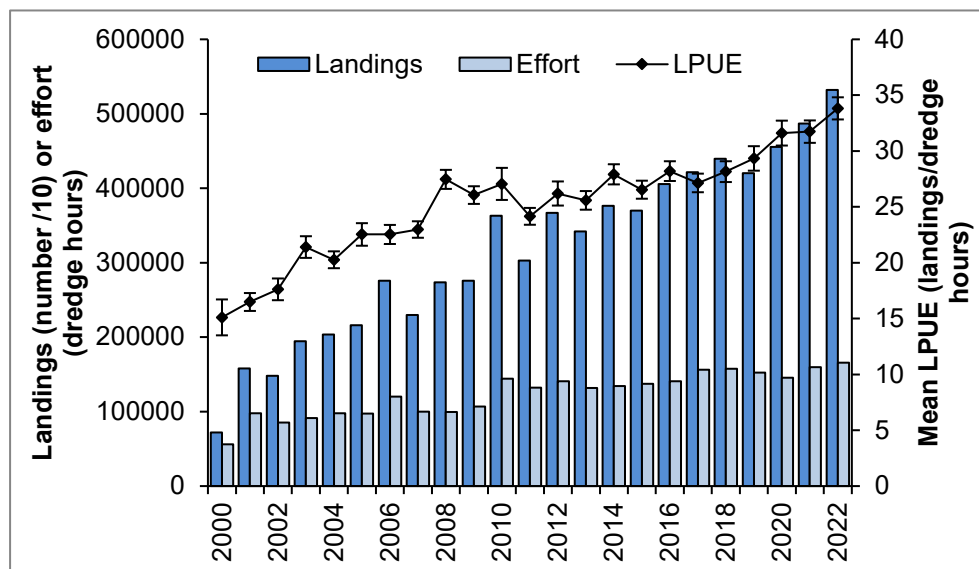


Figure 1 Landings of king scallops (displayed in numbers /10), effort (number of hours by dredge), and mean LPUE (number of scallops caught/hour towed by dredge). LPUE displayed with 95% confidence intervals.

The fishery for scallops occurs in key fishing areas in Yell Sound, around Fetlar and Whalsay, and south along the east coast as far as Bressay (Figures 2-4). Areas of highest LPUE can be seen close to Unst and Yell, on the west side around St Magnus Bay and South Mainland as far as Levenwick. There are areas of high LPUE off Sumburgh in the South Mainland (Figure 4) but there is relatively low fishing effort in this area (Figure 3). Due to the spatial spread of the fishery, further research is planned in order to better understand regional variation in LPUE.

*Napier, I., 2022. Shetland Fisheries Statistics 2021.

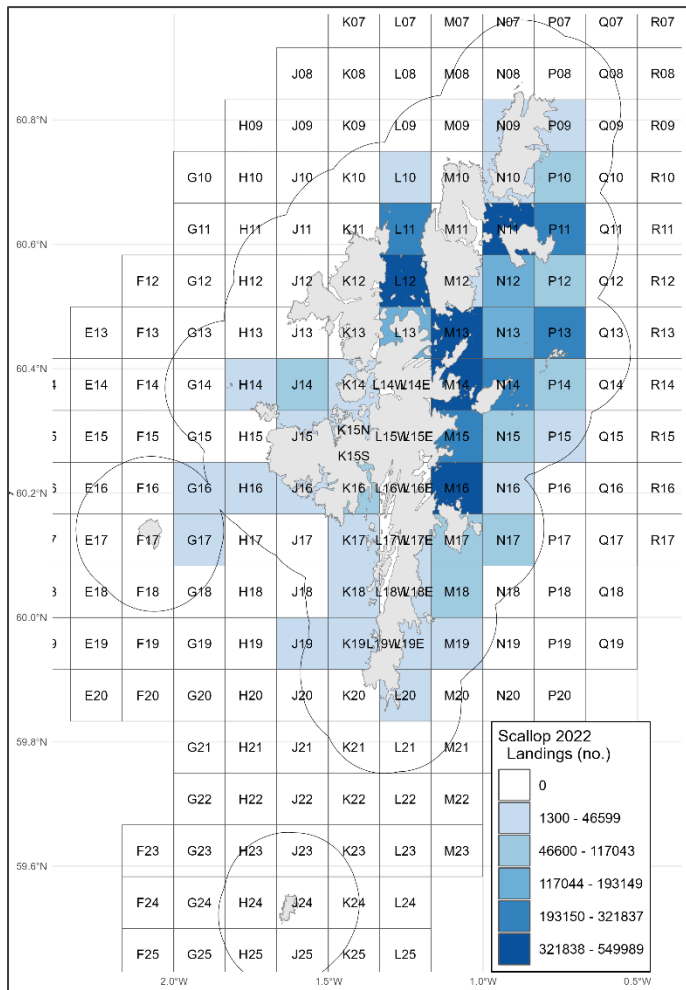


Figure 2 Geographical distribution of scallop landings per SSMO statistical square in 2022.

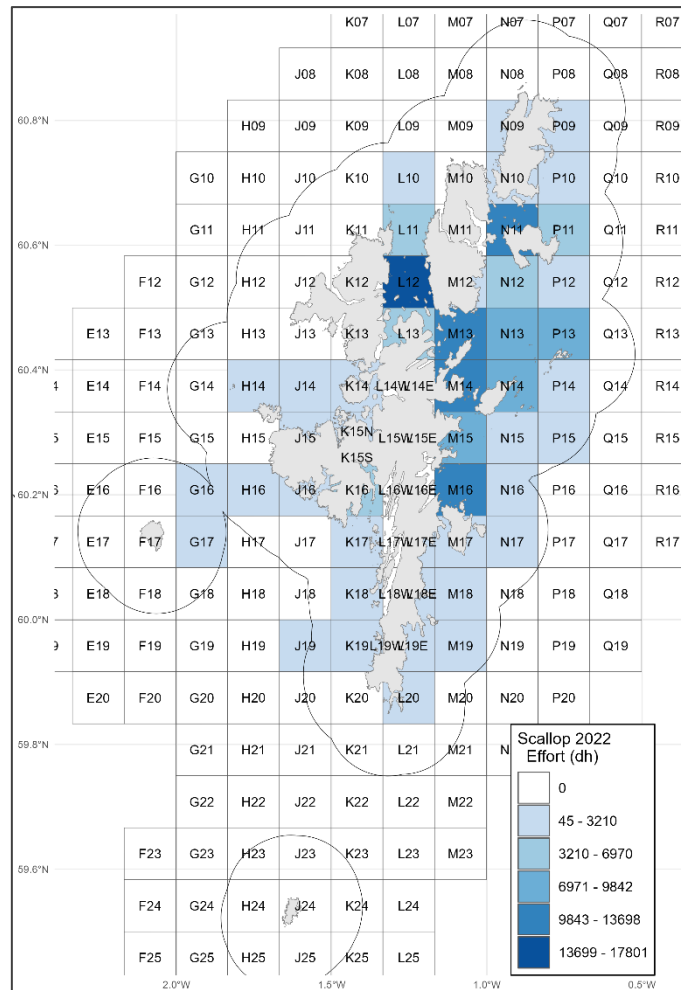


Figure 3 Geographical distribution of scallop effort per SSMO statistical square in 2022.

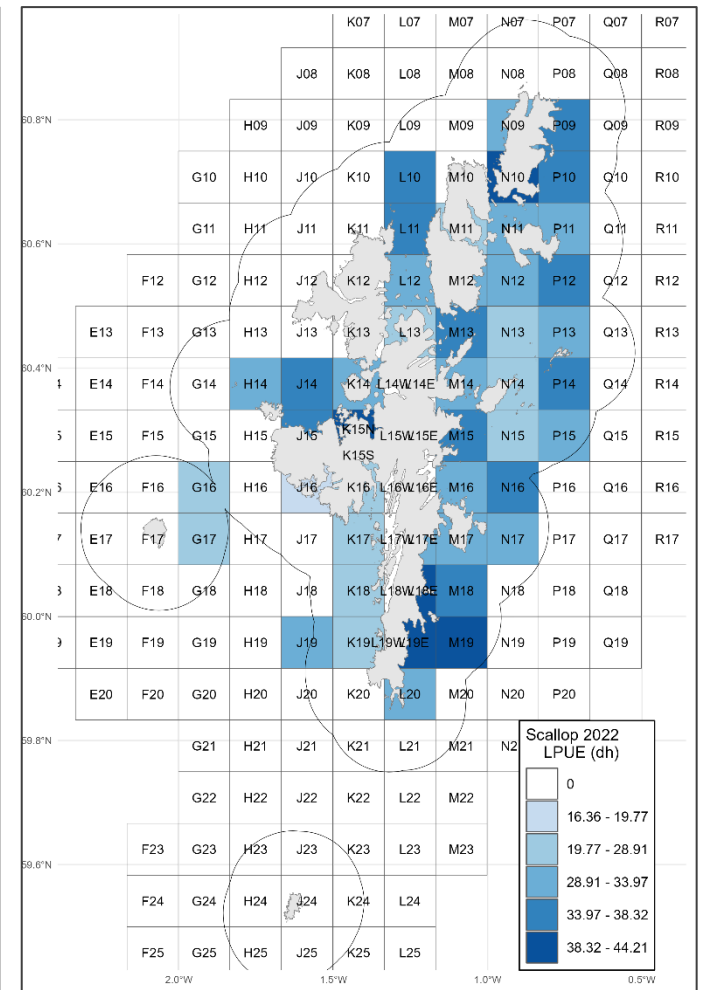


Figure 4 Geographical distribution of scallop LPUE per SSMO statistical square in 2022.